

Recreation and Conservation Office

# Boating Grant Programs Policy Plan

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October 2009



## *The Role of the Recreation and Conservation Office in Recreational Boating*

The Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) manages seven grant programs that support recreational boating. These programs are

For motor boating

- Boating Facilities Grant Program
- Boating Infrastructure Grant Program

For non-motor boating

- Aquatic Lands Enhancement Account
- Recreational Trails Program
- Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program, Outdoor Recreation Account

For all boating

- Boating Activities Program
- Land and Water Conservation Fund

The money from these grant programs is intended to encourage managing agencies to provide the best possible sites and facilities for the recreational boating public.

As the neutral facilitator of the open, public grant process, RCO does not initiate nor advocate for projects. The agency relies on the initiative of providers to identify boating projects that meet program intent and goals and to prepare grant applications.

This Policy Plan explores the broad context of recreational boating in Washington, presents results of general recreation and boating-specific surveys, and provides policies intended as a foundation for guiding grant funding. These policies are intended to help ensure that grants go to projects that satisfy boater needs, address provider challenges, and respect the environment.

The policies will be implemented by RCO, as directed by the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board (RCFB), through grant program rules and evaluation instruments.

## *Policies for RCO Boating-Related Grants*

### **General Policies**

- Policy A-1** *Recreation and Conservation Office boating grants are intended to facilitate physical access to and from water. While diverse, compatible recreational uses of boating facilities are encouraged, sites and facilities supported by grant programs shall emphasize consistency with grant funding sources.*

RCO shall serve the motor boat community through the Boating Facilities Program, and the Boating Infrastructure Grant program. RCO shall serve the nonmotorized boating community through other available funding sources, including but not limited to the Land and Water Conservation Fund, Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program, and the Aquatic Lands Enhancement Account (ALEA). RCO shall follow the requirements of RCW 79A.60.670 in distributing funds through the Boating Activities Program.

- Policy A-2** *RCO boating grants shall assist public agencies in providing quality opportunities for the recreational boating public—opportunities that satisfy user needs in an environmentally responsible manner.*

RCO does not own or operate facilities. In making funding available to facility providers, however, RCO will recognize its responsibility as a partner in the stewardship of the natural environment.

- Policy A-3** *RCO boating grants shall support facilities provided for transient public recreational boating uses.*

All RCO grant programs are supported by public funds. Facilities supported by RCO grant funding are expected to be available to the general public. “Transient” facilities include launches, docks, and moorage of all kinds. “Transient” use is short-term, for example moorage up to a maximum of 14 consecutive days. Long-term, permanent, private, or exclusive use facilities are not eligible for grant support.

- Policy A-4** *RCO shall continue to uphold its commitment to public participation, openness, equity, and efficiency in all its programs, including its boating facilities programs.*

Public involvement is the cornerstone of all of RCO's programs. Applicants and sponsors shall be treated with fairness and

professionalism. The public shall be given opportunities to affect RCO policy and grant discussions.

## **Administration Policies**

**Policy B-1** *RCO shall work cooperatively with state agencies to ensure that the boating grant administration is based on valid, up-to-date information, including information concerning the size of the motorized fleet, fuel consumption, and public demand for boating facilities.*

RCO shall work closely with the Department of Licensing and the Washington State Department of Transportation to make an estimate of the fuel consumed by recreational boaters. RCO shall gather data on recreation supply and demand trends to help guide expenditures.

**Policy B-2** *Consistent with the requirements of RCW 79A.60.670, an advisory committee for boating grant programs shall be established and maintained.*

Members of this committee shall help develop and implement program policies established by the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board, including the project evaluation system. Committee members shall have the responsibility to help attain established program goals and objectives. Recommendations by this committee shall reflect program policies and help ensure the integrity of the project evaluation process.

**Policy B-3** *The Recreation and Conservation Funding Board (RCFB) shall review matching share amounts and grant limits as necessary.*

In the interests of openness and equity, RCFB's review will include opportunity for applicants and sponsors to make their needs known.

**Policy B-4** *RCFB shall reserve the right to establish limits on maximum grant amounts ("ceilings"). RCO may waive, lower, raise, or otherwise adjust maximum grant amounts.*

Grant funding is limited. By establishing maximum grant amounts, RCO can better attain program goals. RCO will seek sponsor and public guidance when reviewing maximum grant policies.

**Policy B-5** *RCFB shall allow grant funds to be used for architecture and engineering costs (A&E) equal to that allowable by OFM in its biennial capital budget instructions; costs associated with securing permits are allowed as eligible expenses in capital projects.*

RCO recognizes that development in navigable waters depends on a complex and time-consuming permitting process, and it is appropriate to recognize design, engineering, and permitting costs as a reimbursable expense.

## **Funding Priority Policies**

**Policy C-1** *Recreation and Conservation Funding Board shall encourage projects that best meet the needs of the boating public.*

Boater needs have been surveyed as recently as 2007. Grant evaluation will be consistent with boater needs.

**Policy C-2** *RCFB shall encourage projects that maximize the efficient use of existing sites and facilities.*

Use of existing sites avoids time-consuming and costly land acquisition. Renovation can extend facility service life and reduce need for costly maintenance and repairs.

**Policy C-3** *Local agency sponsors shall be required to provide a matching share. Matching shares may include value of donated land, labor or services, cash, and costs directly associated with securing permits. Funding priority shall be given to those projects whose matching share demonstrates greater non-government contributions.*

Matching shares help maximize the effective use of limited state dollars. Contributions of money, materials, or services by volunteers, the private sector, nonprofit organizations, and others stretch scarce funding and help demonstrate which projects have broad public support. Grant evaluation shall give funding priority to project applications that provide greater matching shares.

**Policy C-4** *RCFB shall encourage projects that use design standards and construction techniques intended to maximize service life and minimize routine maintenance.*

Projects can often incorporate design elements and construction standards that reduce maintenance needs. Adequate consideration of maintenance during the design phase can result in long-term savings that far outweigh most short-term construction cost increases.

**Policy C-5** *RCFB shall give priority to projects under immediate threat.*

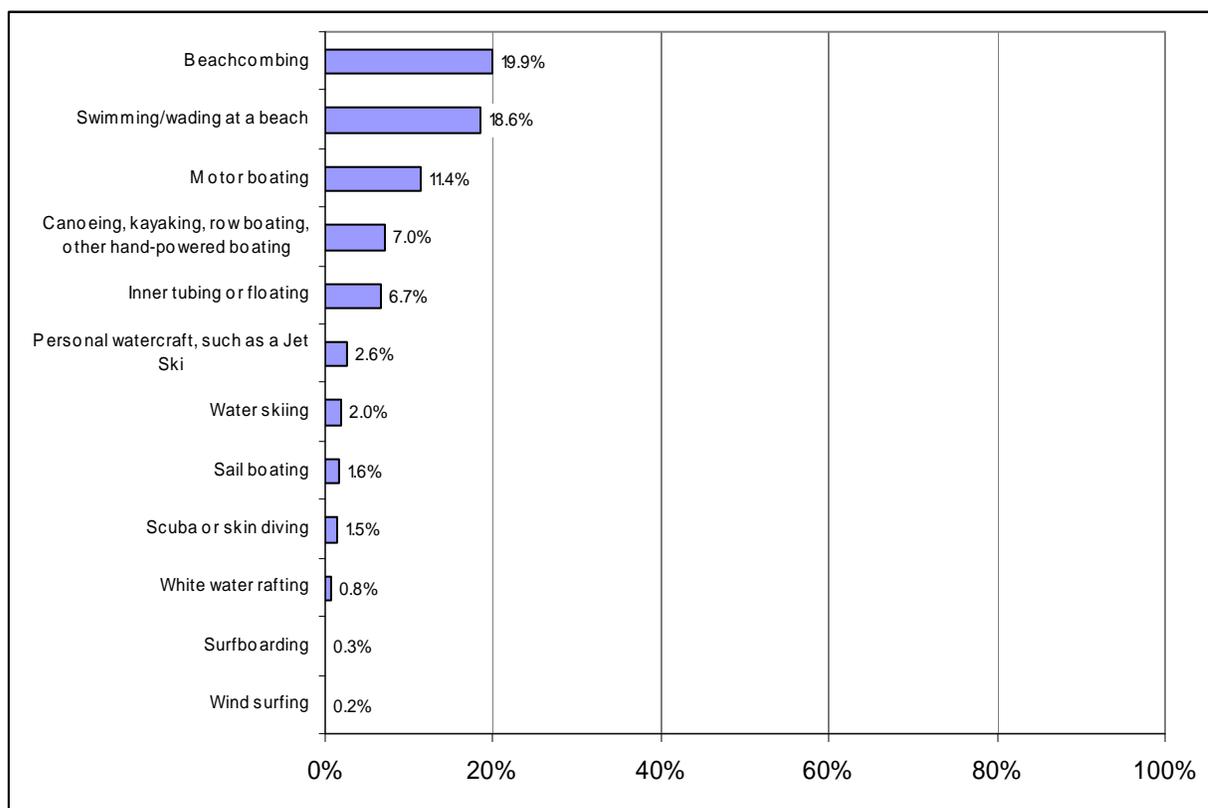
Lands suitable for marine recreation purposes are in demand for competing uses. In some instances, timely action is needed to

acquire or develop land for public marine recreation before the opportunity is lost.

### Who Boats?

Of over 6 million Washington state residents, about 726,000 people motorboat, 446,250 use hand-powered boats (canoes, kayaks, rowboats, and so on), 165,750 use personal watercraft, and 102,000 sail.<sup>1</sup>

Chart 1. Average month participation for water-related activities, including boating: average month participation as a percent of the state's residents 2006-07<sup>2</sup>



Not all people who report boating as an activity report owning a boat of their own. According to the survey conducted in Washington: of those who consider themselves “boaters,” 44% are registered<sup>3</sup> boat owners, 14% are non-registered boat owners, and 42% are non-owners.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> 2006 Outdoor Recreation Survey, Clearwater Research, August 2007.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid

<sup>3</sup> Boats 16 feet in length and longer with 10 or more horsepower propulsion used on navigable waters must register per RCW 88.02.030.

<sup>4</sup> Washington Boater Needs Assessment, Responsive Management, 2007.

### *Demographic Data*<sup>5</sup>

About two-thirds (66%) of boaters overall are male, while 34% are female. Owners of registered boats are predominantly male, but owners of non-registered boats, as well as non-owners are more evenly split regarding gender.

Boaters tend to be older: age groups 45 years old or older predominate. The mean age is 50.6 years.

The mean number of years of state residency of boaters is 35.9 years. Overall, boaters tend to have a fairly long residency.

The majority of households of boaters (67%) consist of two people. The majority of households of boaters (59%) have no children 17 years of age or younger, while 36% have at least one child.

Non-owners, compared to all boat owners, have smaller households, in general. Additionally, a lower percentage of non-owners have children living in their household. The number of people in the boater's household varies only slightly by boater type.

Regarding education levels of boaters: 75% have at least some college or trade school coursework, and 44% have a Bachelor's degree (with or without a higher degree also). Sail boaters and paddlers are much more likely to have degrees than are the other types of boaters.

### *What Kinds of Boats Are Used?*

Of all boat owners, 75% own a motor boat, 19% own a hand-powered boat other than canoe or kayak, 14% own a kayak, 12% own a canoe, 8% own a sailboat, and 5% own a personal watercraft.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Unless otherwise noted, all data including survey response graphs are from *Washington Boater Needs Assessment*, Responsive Management, 2007.

<sup>6</sup> *Washington Boater Needs Assessment*, Responsive Management, 2007.

### Recent Trends in Boat Ownership

In 2003, RCO estimated that the recreational fleet was made up of just over 310,000 boats of all kinds, motor, sail, and human-powered. In 2008, the fleet was estimated to be made up of about 334,000 boats

Using Department of Licensing registration numbers as guide, RCO estimates that the recreational motorboat fleet has grown about 0.8% per year, with growth driven by large boats that are normally stored on the water.

Year	Under 16'	16' to 20'	21' to 30'	31' to 40'	41' to 50'	51' to 60'	Over 60'	Total Boats
2000*	104,049	106,837	34,912	9,422	2,885	493	325	258,923
2008*	98,574	118,359	45,481	10,739	3,716	759	523	278,151
<b>Growth Rates</b>								
	-5.5%	10.8%	30.27%	13.97%	28.8%	53.95%	60.9%	7.4%
<i>*Data from Washington State Department of Licensing</i>								

Participation in hand power boating (canoe, kayak, rowing) appears to have doubled between 2000 and 2007, from about 3% of the state's residents to about 7% of the state's residents, roughly 455,000 people. As a percentage alone, the growth in hand-powered boating has been faster than the state's estimated population growth of between 0.93% and 1.9%.<sup>7</sup>

2007 and 2008 saw enormous changes in the economics of boating. Retail prices of petroleum products proved extremely volatile, reaching highs of over \$4 per gallon in summer 2008. The downturn of the credit market worldwide, accompanied by increased unemployment statewide, put pressure on retail boat sales. These factors certainly contributed to dealer sales of new boats dropping by as much as 43% in one quarter of 2008.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Population estimates from Washington Office of Financial Management, [www.ofm.wa.gov](http://www.ofm.wa.gov)

<sup>8</sup> Boat sales activity report, 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter 2008, Washington SeaGrant, [www.wsg.washington.edu](http://www.wsg.washington.edu)

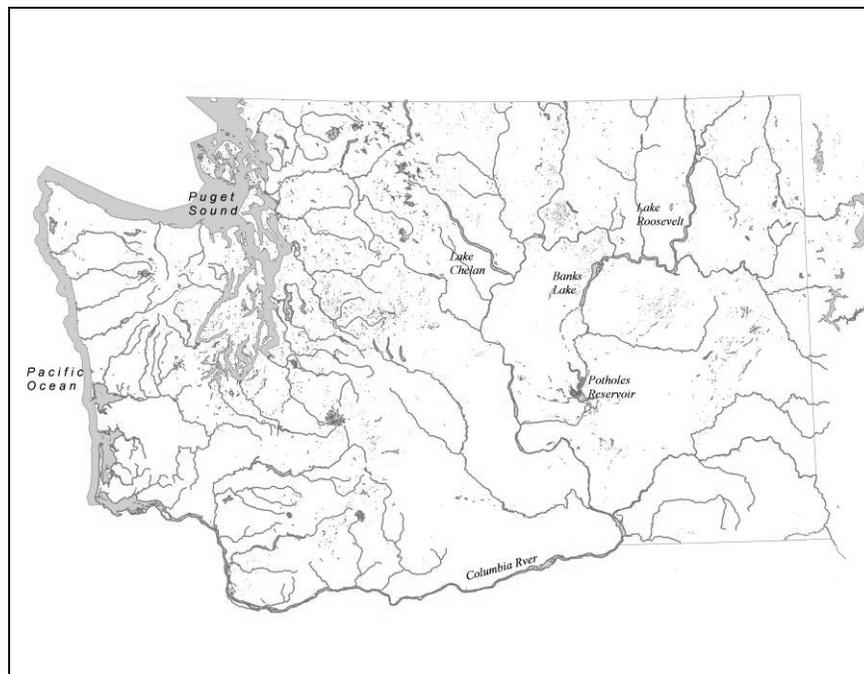
## Where People Boat

“The most notable... topographical features in [Washington]... state are the salt-water areas—the ocean and the ocean shore, Puget Sound, the Strait of Juan de Fuca, and the Strait of Georgia. Pacific coastal waters off Washington and in U.S. jurisdiction total 226 square miles. The ocean shore extends about 157 miles long and the tidal shoreline about 3,026 miles.... Puget Sound which is about 90 miles long from the Strait of Juan de Fuca to Olympia, covers 561 square miles.... Eighteen hundred miles of indented shoreline and the islands in the sound provide unending scenic variety and abundant recreational opportunities. Hood Canal, a natural inland waterway off Puget Sound, extends inland about 60 miles. Its shoreline of 242 miles provides outstanding opportunities for boating....

“The Strait of Juan de Fuca, which connects the ocean and Puget Sound, and the Strait of Georgia, which is north of the San Juan Islands, are other large salt-water areas with fine opportunities for fishing and boating. The Strait of Juan de Fuca has a Washington shoreline of 178 miles, the Strait of Georgia 98 miles.”<sup>9</sup>

Inland, Washington State offers 8,000 lakes (including 3,093 high mountain lakes over 2,500 feet in elevation) and 50,000 miles of waterway from the 750-mile Columbia River to local salmon-bearing streams.

Figure 1. Major water bodies in Washington State



<sup>9</sup> *Washington Statewide Outdoor Recreation and Open Space Plan*, State of Washington Department of Commerce and Economic Development, 1967, page 22

Boaters tend to boat in the county in which their boat is registered.<sup>10</sup> The leading boating county in boating days, by far, is King County (18.4% boated the most days there), followed by Pierce (8.2%), Snohomish (6.6%), Clark (4.4%), and San Juan (4.3%). An analysis of where boaters boat the most days relative to the county in which they live found that 62% of boaters boat the most days in their county of residence. 82% of boaters boat the most in the county where they prefer to boat: From a regional perspective, the Islands, Seattle/King, and West Northern Cascades Region is the most popular region (41%).

### *Activities and Motivators Associated with Boating*

53% of boaters report fishing while boating. Other common activities include sight-seeing/fish and wildlife viewing (34%), water skiing (19%), relaxing or entertaining friends (17%), being with family and friends (17%), and water tubing (15%).

When asked to say what motivates them to boat, boaters most commonly answer relaxation (49% gave this as a reason for boating), followed by fishing (29%), to being with friends and family (26%), general recreation (14%), and being close to nature (11%).

### *Why People Do Not Boat More*

A majority of boaters overall (62%) indicate that there are things that take away from boating satisfaction or cause them not to boat as much as they would like. These include the cost of boating, work obligations, weather, lack of or poor access, crowding on the water, and family obligations.

Further:

- Cost is cited more often by motor boaters than by any other type of boater.
- Poor access is cited more often by paddlers and motor boaters than by the other types of boaters.
- Crowding at boat launch ramps is higher among motor boaters than among any other type of boater.

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<sup>10</sup> *Washington Boater Needs Assessment*, Responsive Management, 2007.

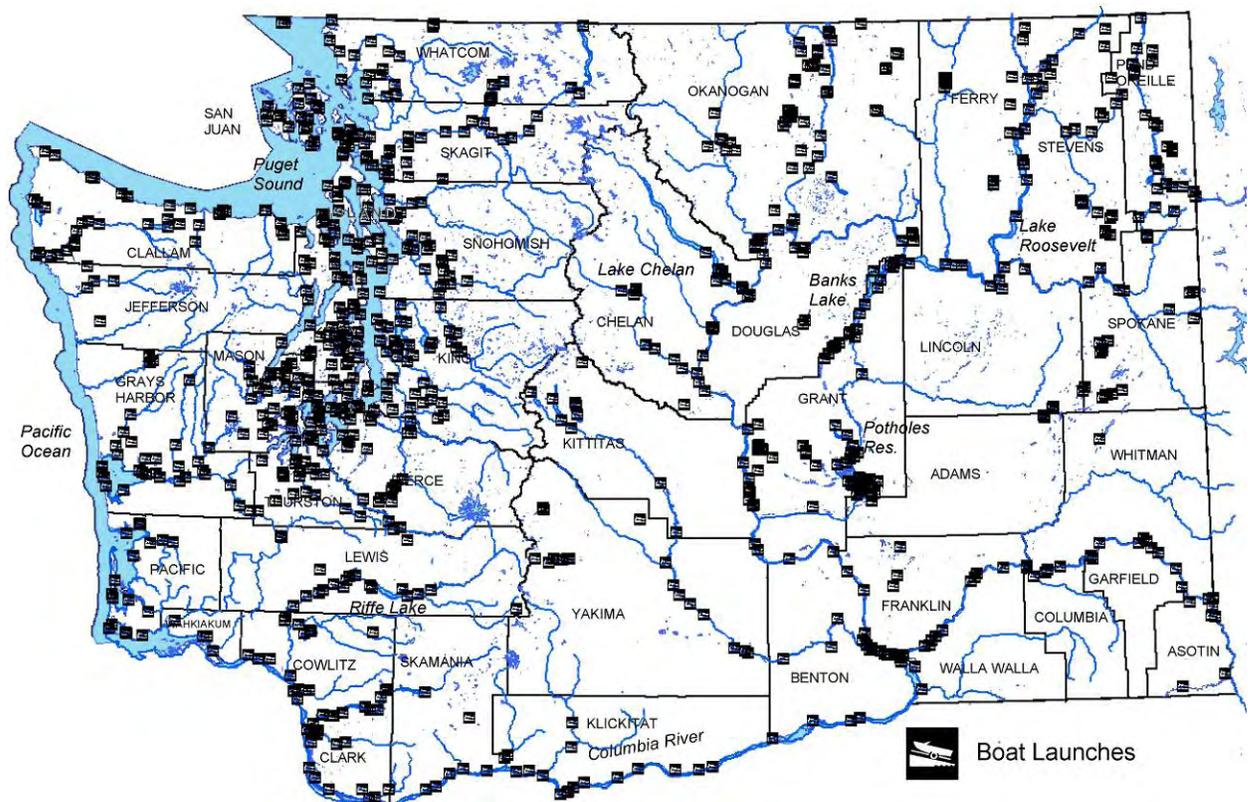
## What Facilities do Boaters Use?<sup>11</sup>

A “typical” boater needs an access site, launch, dock or float and support facilities such as restrooms.

A “typical” motorboat launch site consisted of a single concrete ramp with a gravel parking lot with a capacity of between 20 and 25 vehicles with trailers. Most sites (about 55%) had a restroom of some kind. Fewer sites offered improvements ranging from trash receptacles to loading floats. Only a handful of launches (about 6%) are associated with full services including fuel.

A “typical” non-motor launch may consist of a dock or float, parking area, and restroom. Many paddlers use motor boat launches. Water-accessible campsites are also important to the paddling community.

Figure 2. Distribution of motorboat launches statewide.

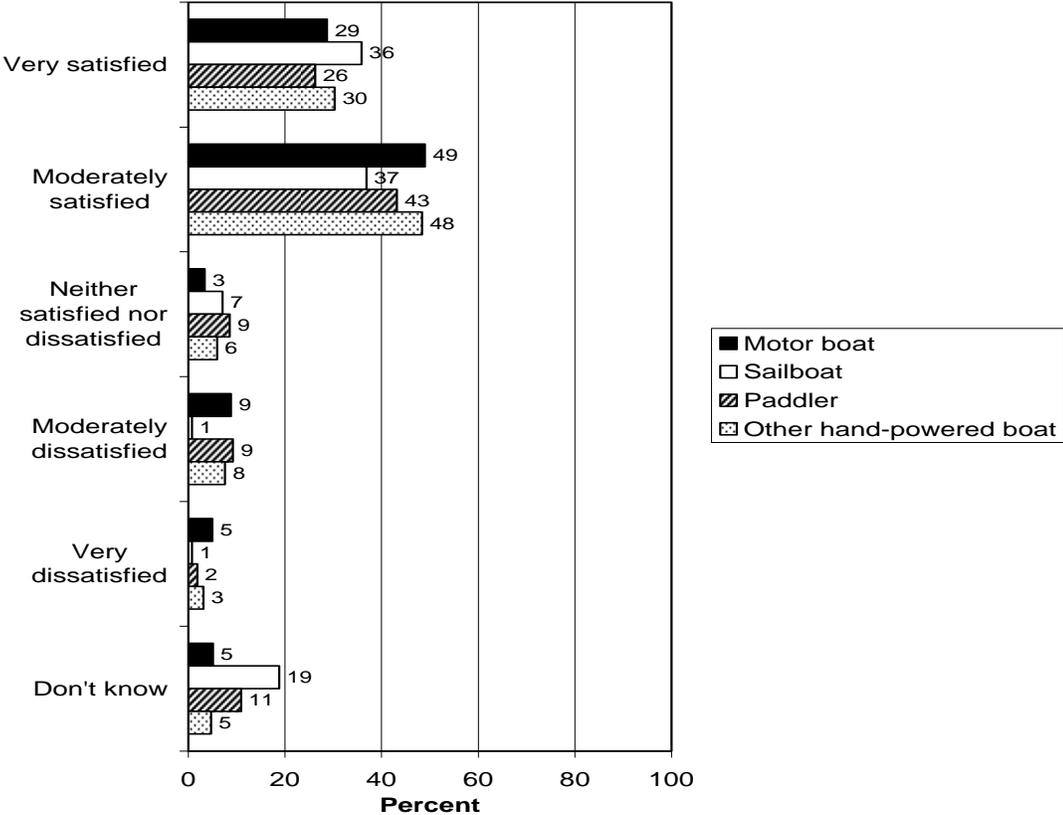


When boaters were asked about facility locations, a large majority reported being moderately or very satisfied with locations.<sup>12</sup>

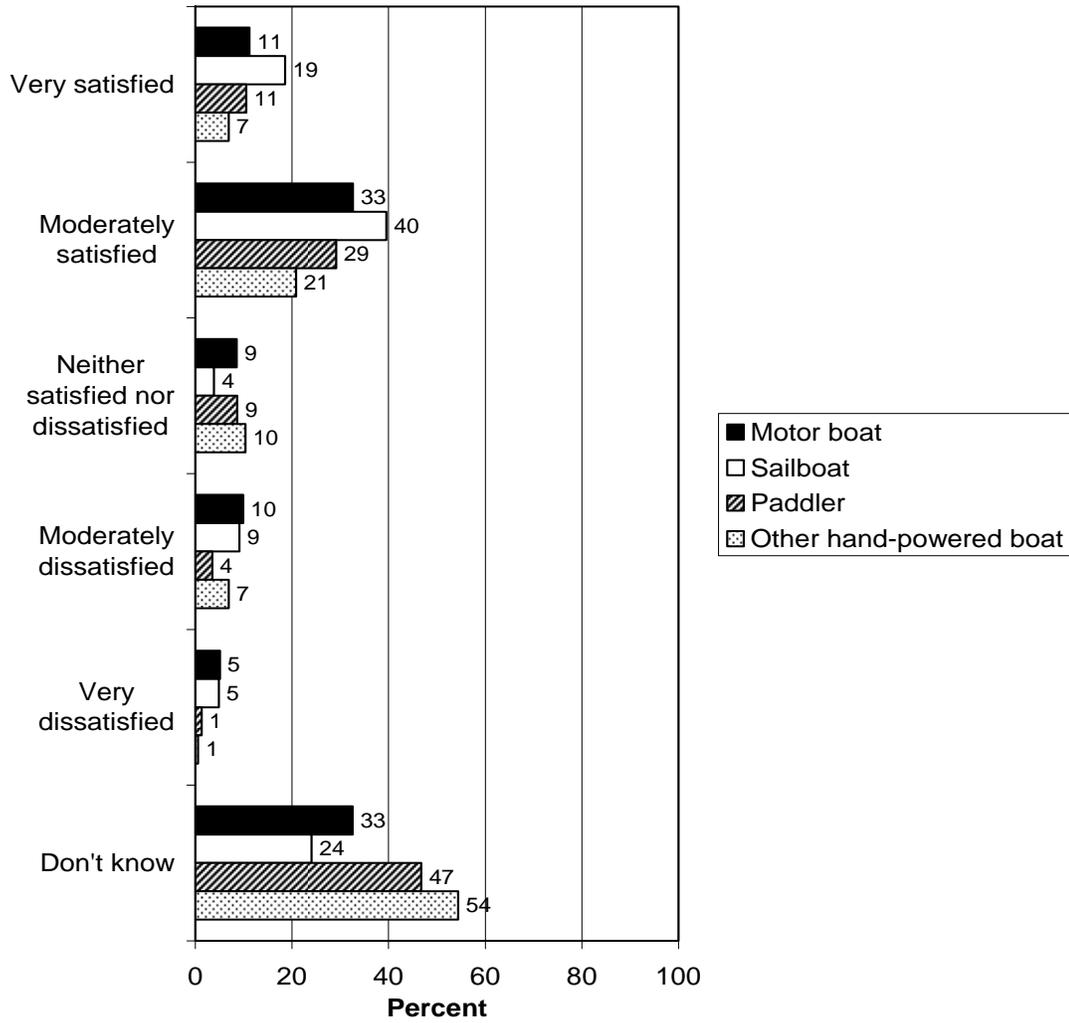
<sup>11</sup> RCO statewide boating facilities inventory data.

<sup>12</sup> *Washington Boater Needs Assessment*, Responsive Management, 2007.

**Q196. How satisfied are you with the locations of boat launch ramp sites in the county in which you boat most often in Washington?**



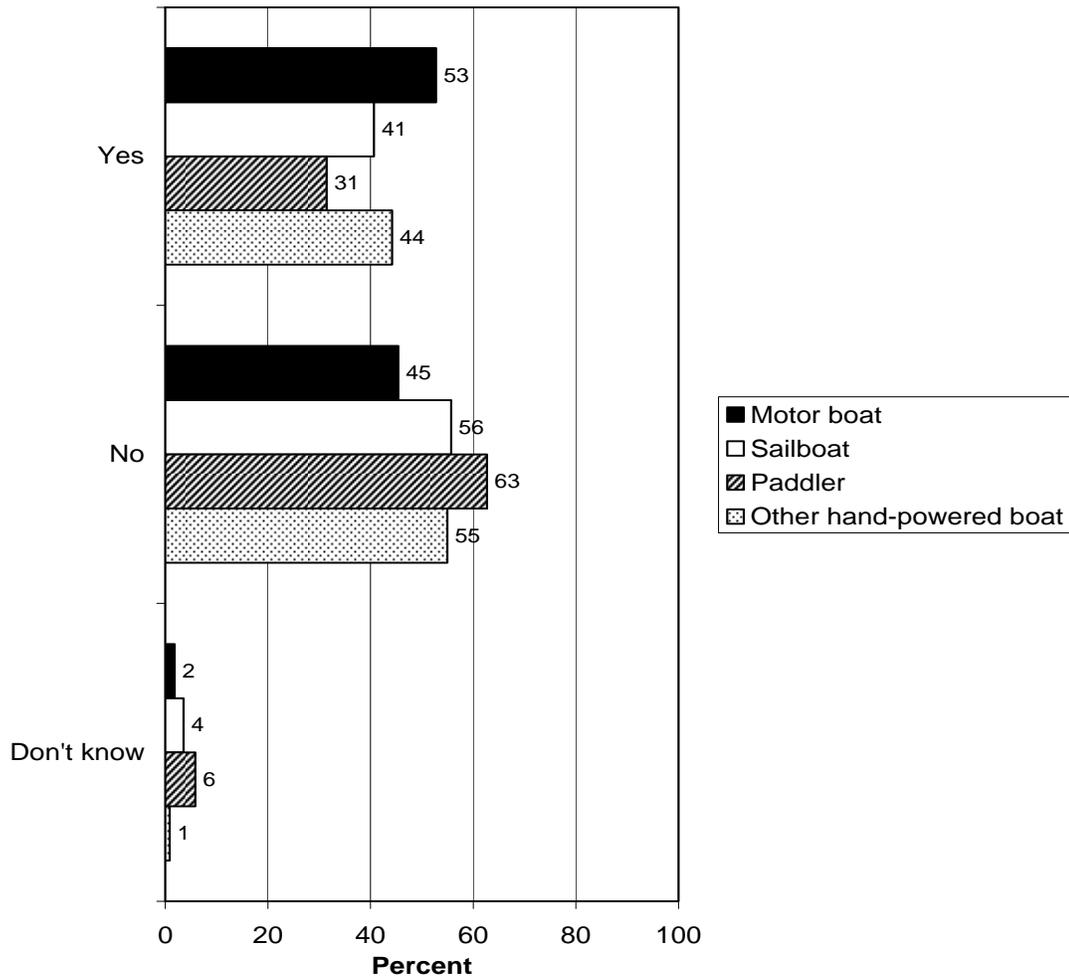
**Q198. How satisfied are you with the locations of mooring buoys in the county in which you boat most often in Washington?**



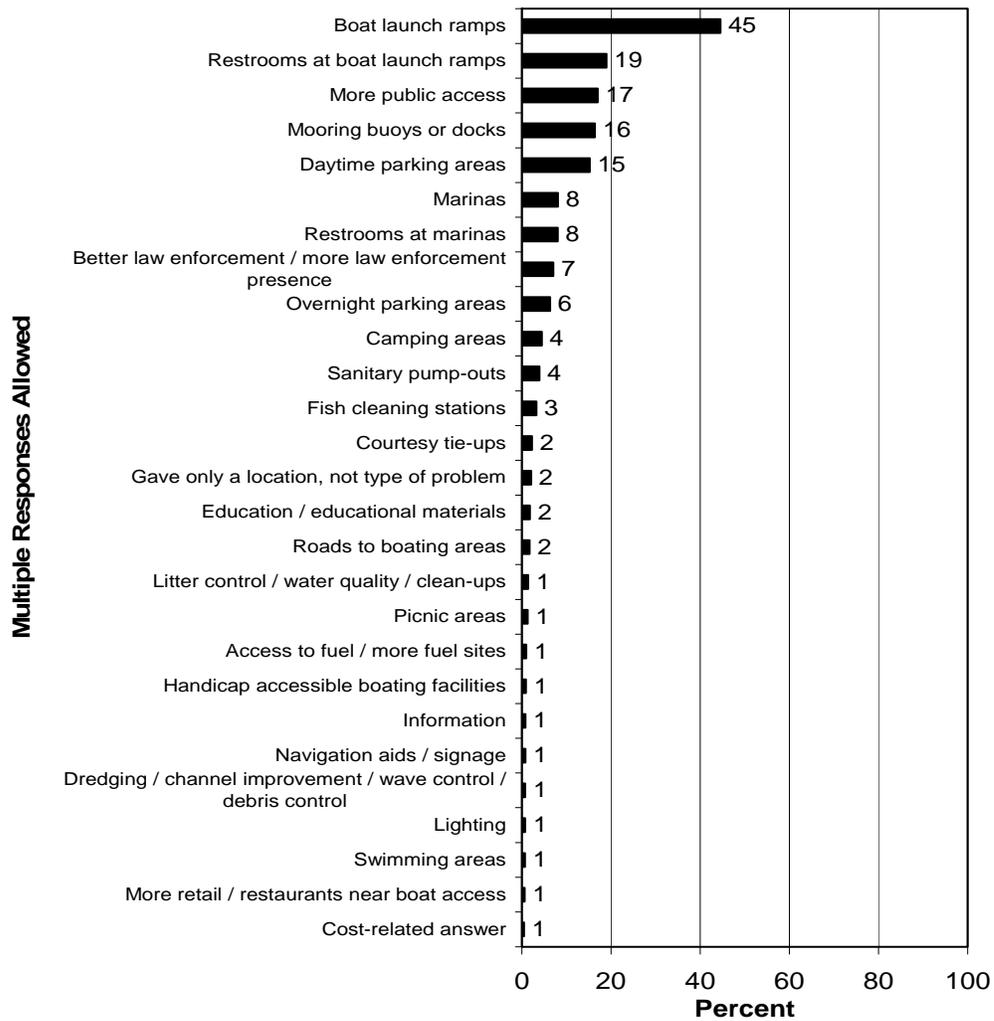
*Facility Conditions*

Boaters were asked about the conditions they find at access sites.

**Q168. Are there any facilities or services in the county in which you boat most often that you would like to see improved?**

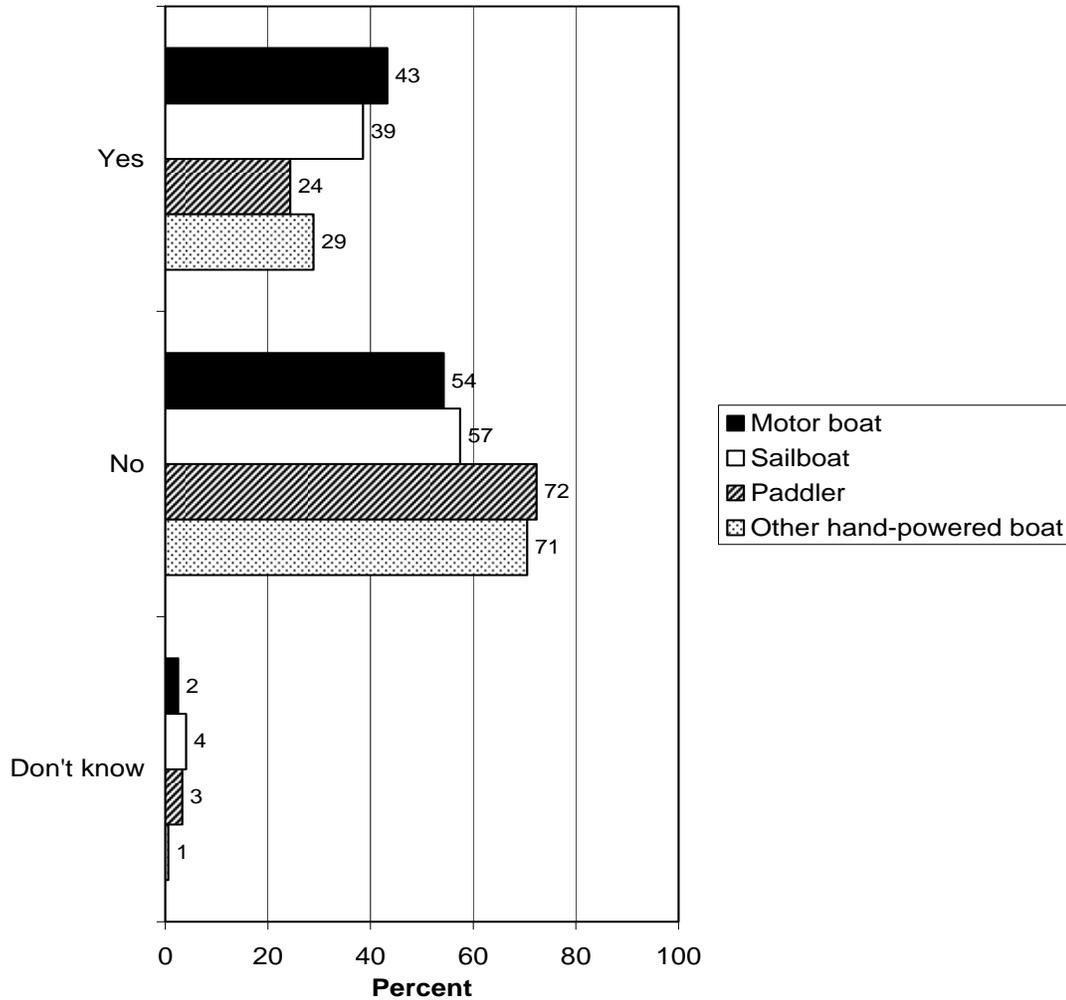


**Q171. What aspects of the facilities or services need to be improved? (Asked of those who would like to see the facilities or services in the county in which he/she boats most often improved.)**



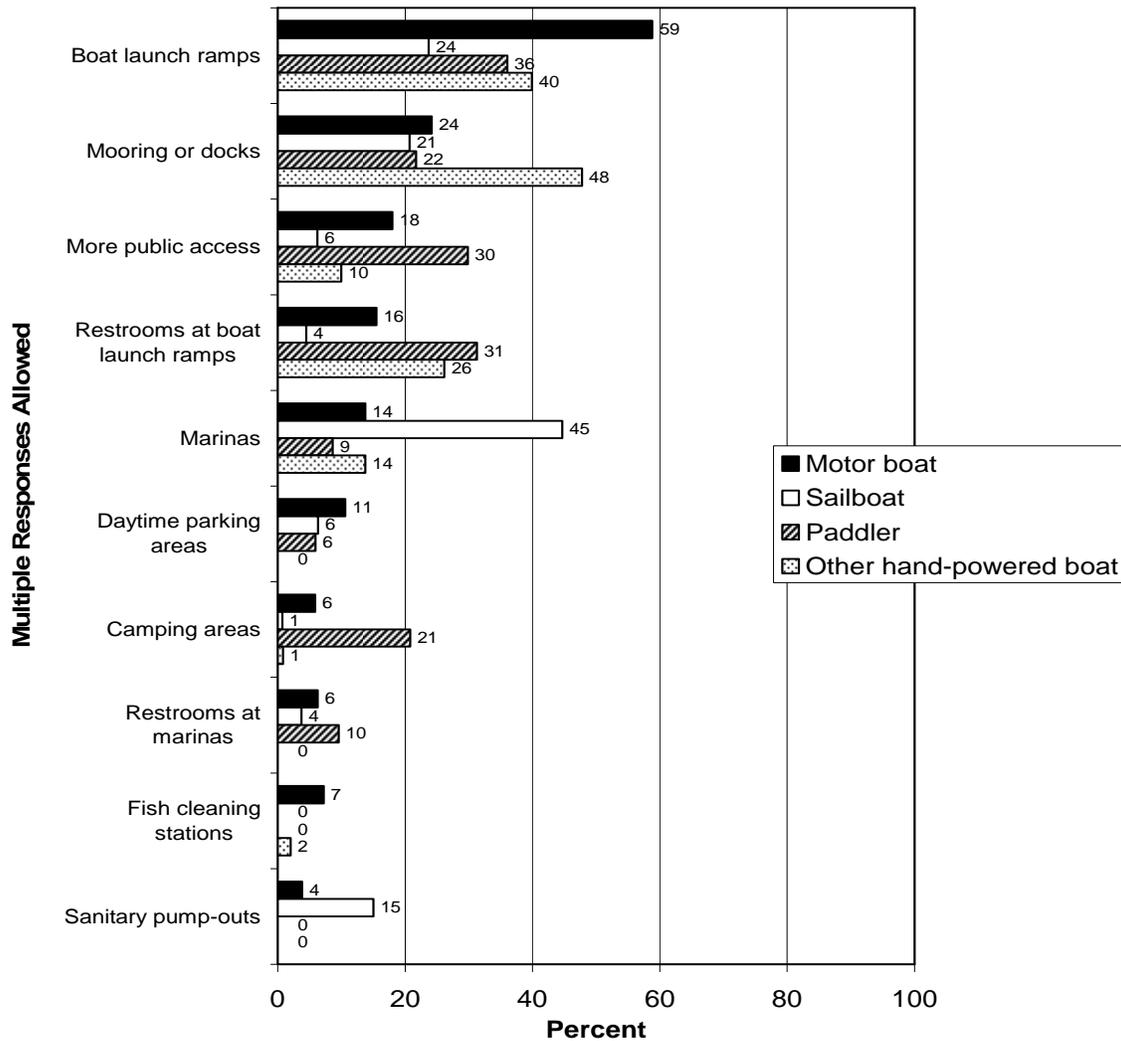
*Are Additional Sites and Facilities Needed?*

**Q191. Are there any facilities or services in the county in which you boat most often that you would like to see built?**



Acquisition and development (Q191) of new sites appears to be less important to the boating public than the improvement and maintenance of existing sites (Q168). However, the minority who want new sites or facilities are clear about specific demands.

**Q194. What would you like to see built? (Asked of those who would like to see a facility or service in the county in which he/she boats most often built.) (Part 1.)**

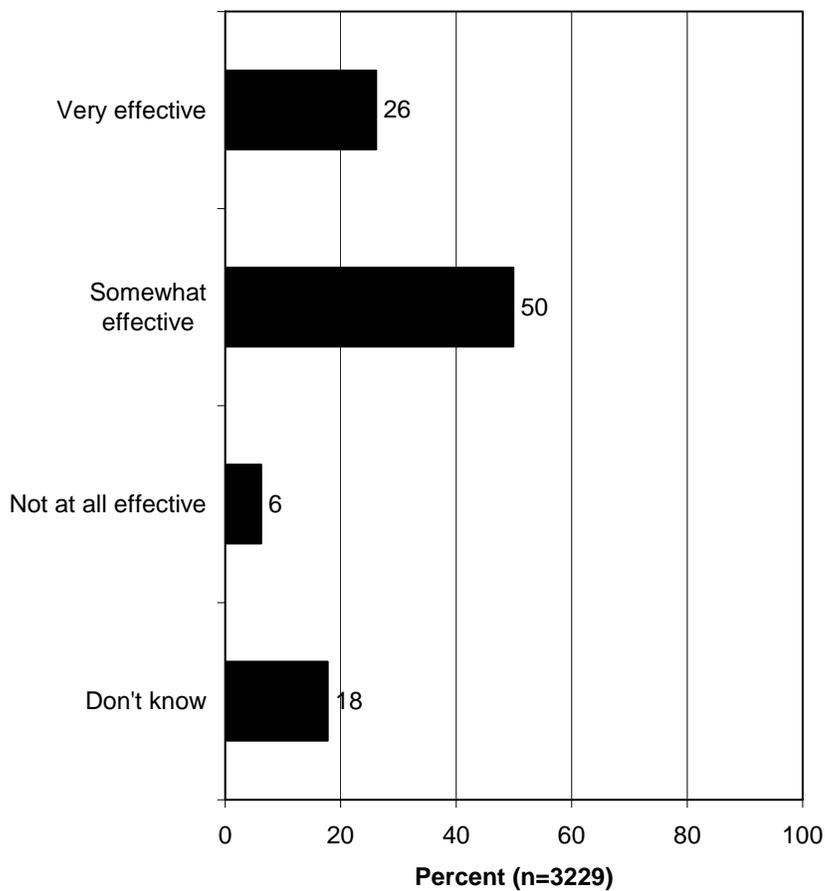


## Who Provides Facilities and Services?

Government Agencies with an Important Role in Serving Recreational Boating			
<b>Federal</b>	<i>Access Sites</i>	<i>Facilities</i>	<i>Programs</i>
Bureau of Land Management	✓	✓	
Bureau of Reclamation	✓	✓	
National Park Service	✓	✓	
US Army Corps of Engineers	✓	✓	✓ Safety, law enforcement
US Coast Guard			✓ Safety programs, law enforcement
US Fish and Wildlife Service	✓	✓	✓ Federal aid to states for sites and facilities
US Forest Service	✓	✓	
<b>Tribal</b>	✓	✓	✓ Law enforcement
<b>State</b>			
Dept of Natural Resources	✓	✓	✓ Information, aquatic lands permits, leases
Dept of Ecology			✓ Facility permitting, water quality programs, shoreline planning and regulation
Dept of Fish and Wildlife	✓	✓	✓ Information
Dept of Health			✓ Marine sanitation
Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO)			✓ Site and facility funding, information
Dept of Licensing			✓ Registration, fuel tax refunds, fuel use research
Puget Sound Water Quality Action Team			✓ Marine sanitation
State Parks	✓	✓	✓ Safety education, marine sanitation, access
Washington Sea Grant (U of W)			✓ Research, statistics
<b>Local</b>	✓	✓	
Cities	✓	✓	✓ Law enforcement, recreation programs
Park Districts	✓	✓	✓ Information, recreation programs
Counties	✓	✓	✓ Law enforcement, recreation programs
Public Ports	✓	✓	✓ Information
Public Utility Districts	✓	✓	✓ Information

*What Does the Boating Public Think of These Providers?*

**Q106. Public boating programs and services, such as education, public access, and law enforcement, are administered by various state and local agencies and organizations in Washington. In general, how effective would you say boating programs and services in Washington are at meeting the needs of recreational boaters?**

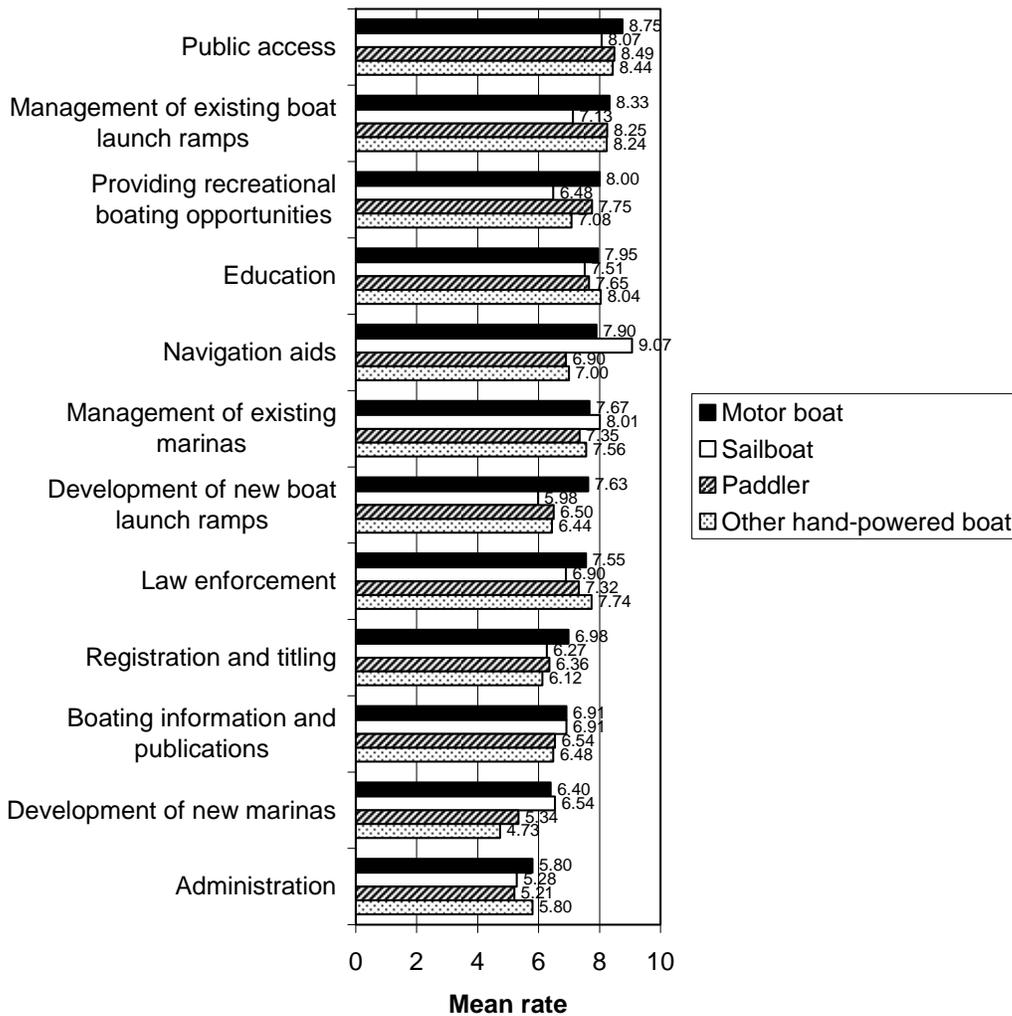


If given a level of service grade for their work, public agency providers have earned an overall "B."<sup>13</sup>

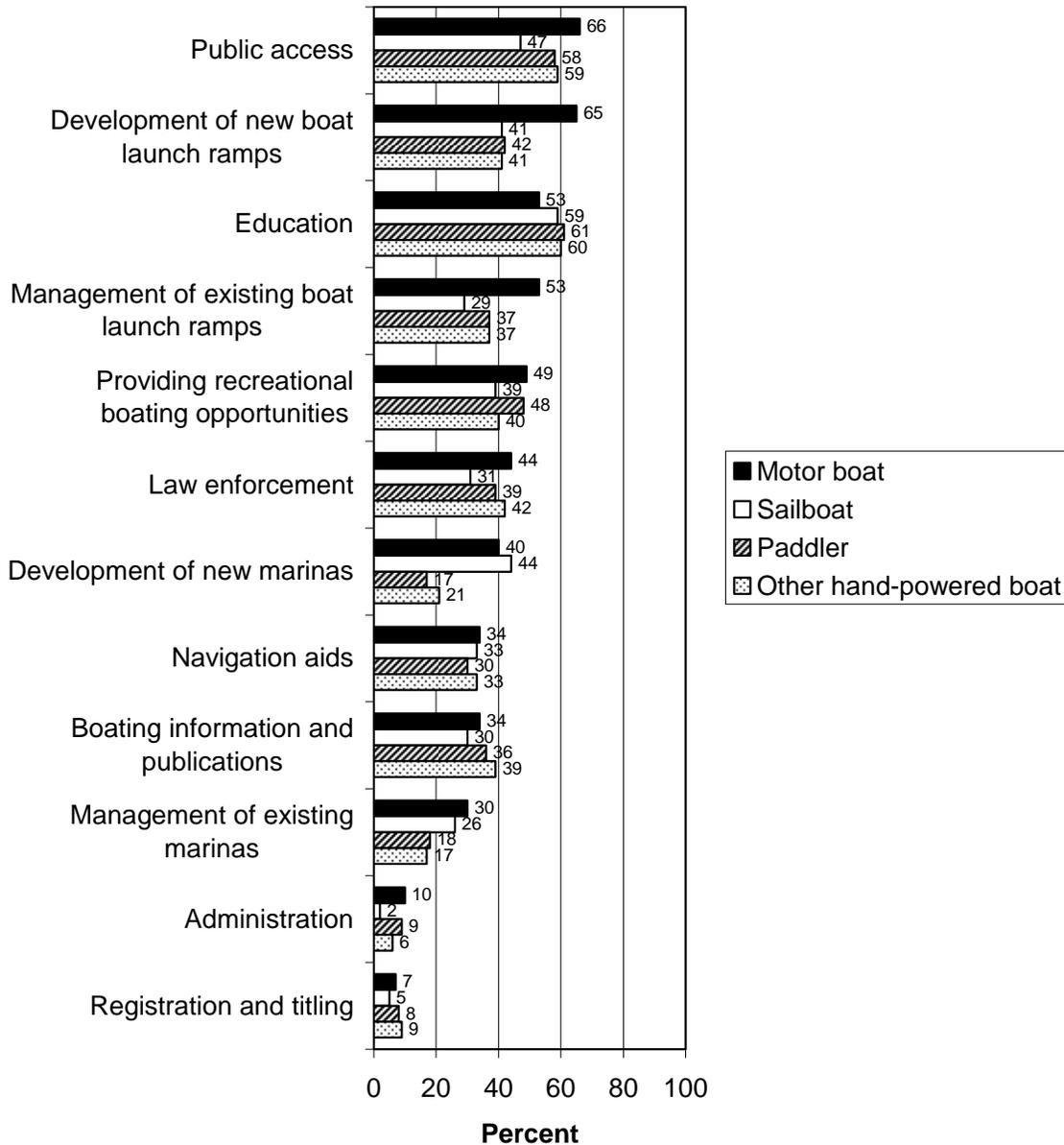
<sup>13</sup> Statement of Mark Damon Duda, Executive Director of Responsive Management, at 2007 public workshop

What are the Public's Priorities?

**Q110-121. On a scale of 0 - 10, where 0 is "not at all important" and 10 is "extremely important," the mean rating of importance for the following boating programs and services managed and provided in Washington.**



**Q138-149. Percent who indicated that more time and money should be directed toward the following boating programs and services in Washington.**



### *RCO's Role in Recreational Boating*

The Recreation and Conservation Office provides services in research including participation data, boating trends, provider needs, and other relevant topics related to boating. RCO also provides grant funding for boating sites, facilities, and services through its grant programs. The grant programs are:

Aquatic Lands Enhancement Account (ALEA) provides new opportunities for people to get to the water and access aquatic resources for recreational and educational purposes. ALEA grants may be used to renovate or improve existing public access to aquatic lands for recreational and educational use, such as creating non-motorized boating access to aquatic lands.

Boating Facilities Program (BFP) is intended to facilitate physical access to water for recreational boating. While diverse, compatible recreational uses of boating facilities are encouraged, funding targets facilities and resources predominantly serving the motorized boating community.

Boating Infrastructure Grant Program (BIG) helps to develop and renovate boating facilities targeting recreational motor boats 26 feet and larger. Funds may also be used to provide information and enhance boater education.

Boating Activities Program (BAP) helps to improve boating access to water and marine parks; to enhance the boater experience; to support boater safety, boater education, and boating-related law enforcement activities; and to provide funds for boating-related environmental programs; and to enhance clean waters for boating.

Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) is a federal program that assists states to provide outdoor recreation sites and facilities for individual active participation. Recreational boating is an eligible activity.

Recreational Trails Program (RTP) helps pay for maintenance of trails. Water trail projects are eligible for funding.

Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program (WWRP), seeks to acquire as soon as possible the most significant lands for... outdoor recreation purposes before they are converted to other uses, and to develop existing public recreational land and facilities to meet the needs of present and future generations. The water access category funds projects that solely or predominately provide physical access to shorelines for non-motorized, water-related recreation activities such as, but not limited to, boating, fishing, and beach access. Other categories (local parks, state lands) may also fund boating projects.

*Do RCO's Grants Pay for Services Important to Boaters?*

<b>Important to Boaters (see Q110-121)</b>	<b>Applicable RCO Grants</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Provide Recreational Boating Opportunities: Public access and new launch ramps	ALEA BAP BFP BIG LWCF WWRP, ORA	RCO provides capital funding to help pay for the land and facilities need for public access to the waters of the State, from boat launches or marine parks.
Boater education	BAP BIG RTP	State law requires any appropriation to BAP of less than \$2.5 million to be transferred to State Parks for safety, education, and law enforcement.
Manage existing ramps	BAP	State law creating the BAP appears to be flexible enough to allow maintenance support at some level.
Law Enforcement	BAP	State law requires any appropriation to BAP of less than \$2.5 million to be transferred to State Parks for safety, education, and law enforcement.
Develop new marinas	BAP BFP BIG	Funds all may be used for marina facilities or elements that directly support transient boaters. RCO will not pay for exclusive use or long-term use facilities.
Navigation aids	BAP BIG	RCO usually pays for navigational aids when they are an element of an access project.
Boating information	BAP BIG	BAP helped to fund the information Internet site <a href="http://www.boat.wa.gov">www.boat.wa.gov</a>
Manage existing marinas	BAP	State law creating the BAP appears to be flexible enough to allow maintenance support at some level for transient facilities.
Administration		RCO grants cannot be used for routine administrative costs.
Registration and titling		RCO grants cannot be used for these activities.

## *Discussion*

RCO-managed grant programs clearly address the priorities of the boating public. The few issues to which grants are not applicable are addressed by other agencies or organizations. Registration and titling, for example, is, according to the data, well provided by the Washington Department of Licensing.

It should be noted that the grant programs managed by RCO were never intended to fully fund statewide boating facility needs. Grant programs were created as a means to leverage local resources. It is clear that RCO's grant programs cannot be expected to pay for all the sites and facilities needed statewide.

Therefore, the focus of RCO should be on the effective and efficient management of the funds entrusted to it for grant programs.

### *How Grants Work: The Project Selection Cycle*

Grant applications are reviewed by RCO staff for technical completeness and consistency with the applicant's current recreation plan. The projects then go through a peer-review process. Written grant applications and verbal presentations by applicants are evaluated by a standing program advisory committee team of experts from state and local agencies and the general public using a series of prepared questions, called an evaluation instrument. The evaluation instrument is developed by RCO in consultation with the public and the Boating Programs Advisory Committee and is approved by the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board. The questions in the evaluation instrument, key to the identification of the best proposals, are designed to assess the overall value of the project to the recreational boating public.

Evaluators give the project a numeric score for each question. Scores from all the evaluators are combined to produce a single score for each project, and projects are ranked within each funding category based on this score.

RCO staff report to the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board (RCFB). The RCFB is an eight-member board consisting of five citizen members appointed by the Governor together with the Commissioner of Public Lands, Director of Fish and Wildlife, and the Director of the Parks and Recreation Commission.

The ranked list of scored projects is considered by the RCFB at a public meeting where testimony from project sponsors and the general public is received. Based on project scores, testimony, and other policy assessments, the RCFB establishes the final ranked list of projects. Depending on the grant program,

some local projects may be funded and placed under contract immediately. In programs such as the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program, the list of projects is sent to the Governor's Office for review and transmittal to the Legislature for inclusion in the state's capital budget.

Some years, the RCO receives more requests for assistance than can be addressed with available funding. These additional requests are retained on a list of "alternates" if funding becomes available. For example, if an approved project is subsequently withdrawn due to an unwilling seller or an unacceptable price increase, the money that would have been spent on that project is then free to be used for the next highest ranked project remaining on the list of alternates.

The RCO enters into contractual agreements with project sponsors. The RCO reimburses the sponsors for eligible expenses, and monitors the progress of the acquisition or development to ensure it is consistent with the original proposal.

### *Policies to Guide Boating Grant Selection*

The policies found at the beginning of this document are intended to be the foundation for translating public need into RCO action.

### *Implementing the Policies*

The key to implementation is the development of program rules and evaluation instruments. RCO staff will work with appropriate advisory committees, affected clients, and the general public to develop rules and evaluation instruments consistent with statute, codes, agency policies, and boater and provider needs.

## *Appendix 1*

### *Sources of Grant Funds*

#### *Bonds*

The Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program (WWRP) is funded by proceeds from the sale of state general obligation bonds. Program funding levels are recommended by the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board for inclusion in the Governor's budget. The Governor and Legislature work together to make final funding level decisions.

#### *Gasoline taxes*

RCO's original boating grant program is the Boating Facilities Program (BFP). BFP is supported by unreclaimed user refunds of state motor vehicle fuel taxes; that is, highway taxes imposed on motor vehicle fuel (gasoline) used in recreational watercraft.<sup>14</sup> The theory supporting the refund, claimed or not, is that the highway taxes collected from recreational boaters should provide a benefit to recreational boating, and not to highways on which boats are not operated.

RCW 79A.25.030 assigns the Director of the Department of Licensing (DOL) the responsibility for determining the "amount or proportion of moneys paid... as motor vehicle fuel tax which is tax on marine fuel." This determination is done every four years. A variety of survey methods, including post card mailings and random sampling via telephone, have been used.<sup>15</sup>

The amount so determined is transferred from the State Treasurer to DOL into the marine fuel tax refund account. DOL pays refunds to eligible boaters making application from this account. After the time limit for refunds has passed, the State succeeds to the right to the funds left. The unreclaimed funds, less the modest amount needed for survey work and DOL administration, are transferred to the recreation resource account (for boating purposes) or the motor vehicle fund (for highway purposes).

Between 1990 and 2003, amounts transferred to the recreation resource account were calculated on a fuel tax rate of \$0.18 per gallon, although the actual fuel tax rate was \$0.23 per gallon: \$0.05 of the motor vehicle fuel taxes paid for boating purposes was transferred to the motor vehicle fund.<sup>16</sup> In 2003, the Legislature

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<sup>14</sup> Boaters may contact Department of Licensing to request a refund of state fuel taxes on gasoline used for recreational boating.

<sup>15</sup> The most recent study was 2009's "meta study" comparing results from 11 studies done over 40 years.

<sup>16</sup> Each \$0.01 results in an estimated \$400,000 to \$500,000 transfer to the outdoor recreation account, based on 2003 dollars.

raised the fuel tax to \$0.28 per gallon, and made a provision that amounts to be transferred to the recreation resource account would be calculated on \$0.23 per gallon in increments described in the table below.

State Fuel Tax Allocations (per gallon of gasoline)			
Year	Total State Fuel Tax Rate RCW 82.36.025	Fuel Tax Rate Used to Calculate Transfer to the Recreation Resource Account RCW 79A.25.070	Fuel Tax Paid by Boaters Directed to Highways
2002	\$0.23	\$0.18	\$0.05
2003	\$0.28*	\$0.19	\$0.09
2004	\$0.28	\$0.19	\$0.09
2005	\$0.31	\$0.20	\$0.11
2006	\$0.34	\$0.20	\$0.14
2007	\$0.36	\$0.21	\$0.15
2008	\$0.375	\$0.21	\$0.165
2009	\$0.375	\$0.22	\$0.155
2010	\$0.375	\$0.22	\$0.155
2011	\$0.375	\$0.23	\$0.145

\*RCW 82.36.025(2) allows this \$0.05 to expire "when the bonds issued for transportation projects 2003 are retired." Bond information is available from the Washington State Treasurer.

The Boating Infrastructure Grant program is supported by the federal Aquatic Resources Trust fund, part of which comes from federal gasoline taxes.

### *State General Funds*

The Boating Activities Program, established in 2007 by SHB 1651, is assigned to the state general fund. Amounts appropriated for BAP are determined by the state's budget process.

Most recreational boats over 16 feet in length are subject to an excise tax of one half of one percent of fair market value.<sup>17</sup> In 2006, the Washington State Department of Revenue reported just over \$16 million in collections.<sup>18</sup> The funds are deposited in the state general fund. Nonmotorized boats, sail boats, and boating equipment are subject to the state sales tax.<sup>19</sup> Therefore, all boaters pay into the general fund.

<sup>17</sup> See 82.49 RCW

<sup>18</sup> Washington State Department of Revenue, report published online at [www.dor.wa.gov](http://www.dor.wa.gov)

<sup>19</sup> The state rate as of January 2009 was \$0.065

### *Revenue from State Aquatic Lands Management*

The Aquatic Lands Enhancement Account grant program is supported by revenue generated from state-owned aquatic lands. Examples include sale of harvest rights for geoduck clams, and leases for marinas.